



PHALACROCORAX MELANOLEUCUS, Vieill.

Pied Cormorant.

Phalacrocorax melanoleucus, Vieill.

Go-go-go, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Little Shag, Colonists of Swan River.

THIS is the least of the Cormorants inhabiting Australia, over every part of which country it is dispersed, wherever a locality suitable for its existence occurs: my own observation would tend to show, that however universal its range is found to be, it is nowhere very abundant. It evinces a greater preference for deep armlets of the sea, inland rivers and lagoons, than for the rocky shores of the coast. Both in Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales, and also in South Australia, I observed it far inland, wherever there was sufficient water to afford it a supply of food, a solitary individual, or at most a single pair, being all that was to be seen in any one district; here it may be seen perched erect on its favourite snag of some fallen tree resting on the bed of the river, or on the leafless branch of a *Eucalyptus* bordering the stream. The shyness of its disposition renders it very difficult of approach, particularly if its natural timidity has been increased by the discharge of a gun in the immediate neighbourhood of its haunts. Its food consists of fish and insects. I once observed several individuals on a new-formed lagoon, occasioned by the abundance of rain that had fallen a few days before, busily employed in feeding upon the insects and their larvæ, which the united agency of the warmth and moisture had brought into life; from the muddy state of the water, they had so soiled their silvery neck and breast during the feast as to be scarcely recognisable. This was in the spring when the feathers are prolonged, and form the dress commonly put on about the pairing time and worn throughout the early part of the summer.

At Port Essington this species is said to construct its nest and rear its young in the tea-trees (*Melanoleucæ*) bordering the rivers near the coast, seven or eight pairs associating for the purpose in a single tree; at this time they are exceedingly pugnacious. The eggs are said to be six in number.

The sexes are precisely alike in colouring, and I suspect that the young assume the white plumage of the under surface from the period of their leaving the nest, as I have never met with a specimen in which that part was of any other colour.

Crown of the head, a broad line down the back of the neck, back, rump and flanks deep shining steel bluish black; wing-coverts and scapularies greyish black, each feather margined with deep black; primaries and tail black; sides of the face, throat and all the under surface pure white; irides greyish white; bill yellow, except the culmen, which is dark horn-colour; orbits dull reddish brown; throat yellow; legs and feet black.

The figures are those of the two sexes of the natural size.